

AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES

February 17, 2005

Members Present: Jean Haggerty, Chair; Doris Holden, Treasurer; Elsie Fetterman, Barbara Sutherland, Al Byam

Absent: Susan Whitbourne, Frank Lattuca, Henry Peirce, Joan Keochakian

Staff Present: Nancy Pagano (Interim Director/Program Director), Maura Plante (Program Director/Services), Karen Erman (Management Assistant), Marlene Barnett (Program Coordinator)

Others: Rosemary Kofler, Marge Babb, Niels LaCour (Planning Dept.), Roy Rosenblatt (Community Services)

Welcome

Meeting called to order at 9:09 AM. Jean welcomed all members and guests. Niels LaCour will be allowed to address the COA after the review of the minutes and the Treasurer's Report.

Minutes of Meeting

Minutes of January 13, 2005, were reviewed and accepted as written.

SENIOR TRUST

Treasurer's Report:

Doris Holden reported that the balance in the checking account is \$831.65 and not \$966.65 as on the written report as one check was written for scholarships in the amount of \$135.00 on January 8, 2005. The total assets are \$88,666.09. If anyone is interested in looking at the recent prospectus she received they are welcome. The Treasurer's report was accepted as written with above balance change to the checking account.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE SEEKS COA REPRESENTATION

Niels LaCour was asked by Nancy to give an update on the Comprehensive Planning Committee. He gave a brief overview of the committee. His purpose in coming is to get COA representation on the CPC. He passed out a membership list and explained that the Comprehensive Planning Committee is "a committee of committees". The committee is looking for a number of people with diverse interests to develop a Master Plan and there has not been any representation from the COA. The committee does not have a specific meeting date and time but tends to meet on Tuesday afternoon from 4:00 to 6:00 PM. Anyone from the COA interested can contact Niels in the Planning Department.

Jean acknowledged that the senior population is growing and that the COA needs to be represented. The COA will look for an at-large member to represent the COA.

COA MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Jean informed the COA members that Joan Keochakian has resigned from the COA as of February 1, 2005. A new member will need to be appointed. Nancy asked if members want to establish a nominating committee to look at potential candidates for the opening on the COA. Also, at the end of June the terms of Jean, Elsie and Hank expire. It was agreed that a committee is needed. Nancy suggested that the members look at existing applications that are pending. Elsie added that a search for candidates be posted and put in the media. Jean agreed and recommended that the members formulate a nominating committee at the next COA meeting. Barbara Sutherland volunteered to be on the committee.

STAFF REPORTS

CDBG Block Grant requests:

Nancy asked Roy Rosenblatt to come give an update and overview of the projects eligible and feasible for funding by the CDBG Block grant. He stated that the van subsidy request presented by the Senior Center (for elders and younger disabled persons of low income who need extra help with transportation costs above what the regular van subsidy offers) is not fundable by the CDBG. Also, Senior Center general renovation projects are not eligible because 50% of the Amherst senior population is not low to moderate income. The only projects that would be eligible would be ones that involve issues of accessibility.

Roy suggested that the \$7,200 that was requested from the CDBG grant for van subsidies could possibly come out of Program Income which has an approximate balance of \$60,000. [The Town, for several years, has been receiving income from prior Community Development Block Grants (as required by prior Housing Rehabilitation programs). Essentially these funds can be spent in any way the Town, ie. administration or the Select Board wants. The Select Board supported using some of these funds for the Van Subsidy request.]

Roy stated that one area that might be fundable through the CDBG grant is housing rehabilitation. He stated that he needs names of people who might need work on their homes and that the more data that can be generated and accumulated, the better the chances of getting CDBG money for housing rehab.

Florence Saving Bank Again Donates to Van Subsidy Account

Nancy announced that Florence Savings Bank has donated \$1,500 to be used for free van tickets to the neediest elders and people with disabilities. The check has been turned over to the accounting department.

Finance Committee Budget Recommendation:

Nancy reported that the Finance Committee's reviewed the Senior Center budget. Their recommendations were:

- Reduce Maura from 5 to 4 days a week
- Karen would work 4 days for the Senior Center and 1 day for Human Rights
- The Formula Grant would be used to support Maura's salary
- The Center Activities budget line item would be raised from \$6,000 to \$6,500 but not be restored to the FY04 level of \$8,000.
- There would be still be no money for training and conferences
- Office supplies would be raised from \$1200 to \$1500. (\$2200 was requested in the needs budget.)

Nancy told the members that this is very discouraging. She gave the Finance Committee a very impassioned plea that the Senior Center is in a growth mode and actually needs 1.5 full time social workers, a full time director, a full time administrative assistant and a full time program director. Staff struggle, with elder needs increasing, to handle the Munson Library and Town Hall scheduling and "Into Amherst", the Town-wide cleanup day.

Jean asked if there is a possibility to get someone from "Experience Works" (formerly the Green Thumb Program) to help out with the office responsibilities. Nancy explained that this program has limitations. The Experience Works Program is a training program for extremely low income seniors to help them be more marketable in the workforce and then to transition to a new job. Carol Hayward who works in the lunch program is in the Experience Works Program. The most hours a person could work would be 24 a week.

COA members expressed the need to inform people of the Senior Center's budget needs **before** town meeting. Discussed was that a letter should go out to Town Meeting members and that the COA members need to attend town meeting to support an adequate budget. At the next COA meeting the members will formulate its position on the budget and decide what avenue to take.

Consultant Mike Letcher coming 2/18:

The consultant hired to do part of the Bangs Center study, Mike Letcher, will meet with the COA members on Monday, February 22nd, at 1:30 PM, to discuss concerns of the Senior Center.

Munson Library scheduling:

Karen continues to schedule the Munson Library. Two months ago Nancy met with Linda Chalfant, Director of LSSE, to ask her department to consider assuming this responsibility. Linda is still deliberating this request.

Student Volunteers:

Maura reported that the Senior Center has 20 student volunteers from Amherst College helping with all programs. Students in Susan Whitbourne's Psychology of Aging class from UMass needs to complete 30 hours of community service in a 10-week period to be considered an honors class. Right now there are 16 students from her class who are presently volunteering here. Also, the Senior Center has two community volunteers, Megan McCarthy and Susan Waite, who are working on a power point presentation for town meeting and the town clean up day, "Into Amherst".

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

FUNDING SUB-COMMITTEE Establishing a “Friends” Group for Fundraising:

Elsie asked if Joan Keochakian had a list of people will to be in the “Friends” group for fundraising. Nancy wasn’t sure if Joan had a potential “Friends” list, but Joan had indicated that she knew of people she could approach to donate money for transportation. Some people who might be interested in being in the “Friends” group are Janice Denton, Sara Wolff, Barbara Melrose, Burt Finger and Isaac Ben-Ezra. Jean asked COA members to think of people who might be interested and she will follow up with Joan to see if she had a list of people in mind.

HVES

Barbara Sutherland reported on the January 18th Highland Valley Personnel Committee Meeting. Updates of board and staff activities and changes was presented. She met earlier with Robert Gallant to discuss what it means to be a member of the Highland Valley Elder Service. Barbara stated that she now has a better understanding and more confidence in this position. The next meeting of HVES is March 7th. Elsie gave members a handout explaining what services and programs are available from HVES.

NEW BUSINESS

Ann Whalen Nursing Center:

Jean gave a report on the new Ann Whalen Nursing Center which has been funded by HVES. Opening day was January 31, 2005, and 38 people attended the first day. There has been an average of 19 people visiting on Mondays, during the 9:00 Am to 1:00 PM hours. Jean has a person helping to keep track of all the statistics. She thanked the Amherst Health Dept for donating the scale that has been in their department and the Amherst Senior Center for donating a new blood pressure cuff. The program has been going very well. The students are enthusiastic and a program on nutrition is being planned next.

Retreat cancelled:

Jean announced that the COA retreat has been canceled. She asked the members to be prepared to talk about their ideas for a long-range plan for the next ten years at the next COA meeting.

WMACA Quarterly meeting:

The next WMACA quarterly meeting is Monday, March 14th, in West Springfield. This meeting is going to be about what changes we can expect in our service delivery population and the Chicopee boomer survey. Nancy would like to know if any COA member would like to attend.

Other business:

Elsie asked if it would help Nancy’s workload if someone could be trained to go on Senior Center trips. Nancy responded that the trips are part of the Senior Center program and that there are liability issues to be considered. Trip supervisors have to be trained in CPR and First Aid and there are times when trip arrangements have to be “tweaked”. In addition to this, Nancy provides free transportation in her car both to and from the departure point which she feels goes along with the other responsibilities. The Town Manager supports her participation. Nancy also expressed that this is essentially the only program that she is still taking part in that gives her face to face interaction with elders to balance out all the computer work of the daily administration and that it is renewing. She tries to schedule trips around all important meetings and when possible she schedules them on her own personal time, ie. weekends, evenings and occasionally holidays.

Next Meeting is March 10, 2005 at 9:00 AM.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 AM.

**Respectfully submitted,
Karen Erman, Management Assistant**